

Checks Not in the Mail

Tax payments go missing

By SUSANNA SHEEHAN

A priority mail package containing two days' worth of real estate tax payments has gone missing within the postal system, town officials announced this week.

Calling the missing deposit "a most serious and unfortunate incident,"

Duxbury Financial Director John Madden told selectmen Monday night that a package containing payments made by residents at the Treasurer/Collector's office window on April 24 and April 25 was never received at the town's lockbox for processing. It was mailed the evening of April 25.

Conway estimated the amount that has been lost is between \$100,000 to \$200,000. She said the package contained between 100 to 150 checks. All checks were stamped "Town of Duxbury, For Deposit Only" on the back, so Madden said it is unlikely they can be cashed. Madden said the checks were not processed at the town hall but sent away to the lockbox for processing in order to better help the large number of people at the Treasurer/Collector's office on those days. He said the town has suspended this practice and

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that every check received at the town hall will be processed there.

"We clearly recognize the gravity of what occurred," Madden said, adding the town is taking this opportunity to implement better business practices.

The lockbox is the address where Duxbury requests its tax payments be mailed. It has been in use since 2001, said Conway.

Conway said it is unlikely the package will ever be recovered. She has been in contact with the dead letter office in Atlanta and the internal auditors at the postal service. Madden said the Duxbury police were notified after the town learned of the missing package.

Taxpayers who currently have an outstanding balance on their tax bill will be notified by the town, said Conway. Taxpayers are asked to pay their bills before May 30. If they do, no penalties will be assessed from April 24. Previous penalties will still apply.

Conway said that the town will reimburse a stop payment fee from a bank on a check if

a taxpayer can show proof of the fee to the town.

No money orders or cashiers checks were sent in the missing package, said

Montessori Academy's 35th Anniversary party at the school on Loring Street on Saturday, May 19. The fundraiser provides money for

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— John Madden
Town Finance Director



Conway. They are handled by the town hall as cash.

Currently, the town accepts on-line payments for water bills and parking tickets and expects to be able to process the August 1 tax payments on-line also, said Conway.

In other business, selectmen:

- Approved a one-day liquor license for the second "Speak for Thyself" banquet for the Alden Kindred at the historic Alden House site on Alden Street from 6-11 p.m. on August 4 and another one-day liquor license for an après golf tournament banquet for the Alden Kindred at the Senior Center on September 24 from 5-7 pm.

- Approved a one-day liquor license for Bay Farm

scholarships for school students.

- Approved a request by the Duxbury Community Garden Club to use the Millennium Town Green to hold a small farmers market on June 2 from 11 to 4 p.m. Approximately seven vendors will provide plants, vegetables, herbs and other items. The money generated goes into the town beautification fund to help maintain the town green and plantings around Duxbury.

- Accepted the resignation of John J. Geary from the North Hill Advisory Committee and appointed Anthony Floreano to fill his unexpired term until June 30, 2008.